

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 5-12 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Rule 26 13. ⁷[(New)] An apparatus for electroplating as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a plating chamber having an interior with said non-oxidative atmosphere, said plating bath provided inside the plating chamber.

Sub B3 14. ⁸[(New)] An apparatus for electroplating as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plating chamber includes a gas supply port for supplying said non-oxidative gas to said plating chamber and a gas evacuation port for evacuating gas contained in the plating chamber.

15. ⁹[(New)] An apparatus for electroplating as claimed in claim 1, wherein said metal is a copper film, said plating bath is provided in a plating chamber having means for embedding said copper film in a groove or a connecting hole of an article to be plated in said plating bath, whereby voids formed in said copper film include an inert gas forming said non-oxidative layer, and whereby said copper film may be heat treated without oxidation of said film.

¹⁰ 16. ¹⁰[(New)] An apparatus for electroplating as claimed in claim 2, wherein each of said pre-treating chamber and said transportation chamber contain said non-oxidative atmosphere.